



NAME: CAPT JO ANN SPEARMON

JOB TITLE: BRANCH CHIEF, AIDS DRUG
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

AGENCY: HEALTH RESOURCES AND
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA)

Description of Current Position:

Jo Ann M. Spearmon currently serves as the Branch Chief for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). ADAP is a federal grant program authorized under Title II of the Ryan White CARE Act, to provide medications to low-income individuals with HIV disease who have limited or no coverage from private insurance or Medicaid.

CAPT Spearmon leads a team in HRSA that is responsible for monitoring 54 established State and Territorial ADAPs to improve quality, availability, and organization of health care and support services for individuals and families affected by HIV disease. She is principally responsible for establishing ADAP priorities which, respond to new and emerging issues that impact planning and delivery of HIV care services and assist in carrying out HRSA's mission.

Specifically, her responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Working collaboratively with grantees (state programs who have been awarded ADAP grants) to develop strategies for implementing and delivering high quality and comprehensive care and treatment to all persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- Providing grantees with direction and guidance to assist them in using the most cost-effective methods to purchase medications.
- Assisting grantees in making formulary decisions to ensure that ADAP clients have access to current and emerging therapies.
- Preparing, analyzing, and disseminating budget forecasting reports to state ADAPs that describe actual and planned use of ADAP funds.
- Developing, coordinating, and conducting periodic state on-site program reviews and assessments of grantee and subcontractor compliance with ADAP mandates and regulations.

- Serving on a HRSA committee to address medication distribution strategies in resource-poor countries.

Education/Degrees/Certificates/Institutions:

CAPT Spearmon received her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Howard University and her Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Maryland at Baltimore. She also completed a Certificate Program in Ambulatory Pharmaceutical Care through the University of Illinois at Chicago and has a Masters of Public Administration degree from American University.

Qualifying Skills for Current Position:

To successfully fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the branch chief for ADAP, CAPT Spearmon believes proficiency in the following skills has greatly enhanced her ability to do her job.

- A strong clinical background - Having a strong clinical background has enabled CAPT Spearmon to effectively assess potential therapeutic outcomes of patients with HIV disease. This ability has been very useful, particularly when monitoring and making recommendations on state formularies pertaining to drug therapy.
- Management experience - CAPT Spearmon supervises a staff of seven professionals and two support staff who oversee 54 state and territorial ADAPs. Her ability to resourcefully prioritize projects with successful time management has been essential in effectively coordinating and fulfilling the associated responsibilities.
- Good communication skills - Along with effectively managing the demands of the various program initiatives, CAPT Spearmon has found that both verbal and written communication skills are essential for success. She routinely strategizes with grantees on ways to implement Agency priorities; responds to specialized inquiries including public and media requests; and coordinates working relationships with other federal and non-federal organizations.
- Ability to think outside the box – The rules governing healthcare services and programs are constantly evolving. Maintaining the status quo often times is not sufficient to achieve the intended goals. In order to successfully meet the challenges ADAP is faced with, CAPT Spearmon must be flexible and creative in her approach to solutions.
- Experience in regulatory affairs - The key to accomplishing goals in ADAP, or in any other government program, is to have a good understanding of

bureaucratic operations. CAPT Spearmon gained an understanding of federal government operations through her exposure as a regulatory review officer in the Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising, and Communications in FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research and on the state level as a Supervisory Pharmacist at the Commission on Mental Health Services. Additionally, she has participated on a wide variety of professional committees, which involved both government, private, and industry representation. This accrued knowledge has prepared her for most of the regulatory situations she encounters.

Reasons for Choosing the USPHS as a Career:

Given that the mission of the PHS is to promote the health of the nation, CAPT Spearmon felt USPHS would provide an excellent opportunity to explore different healthcare settings and expand her professional expertise as a pharmacist.

Previous USPHS Assignments:

CAPT Spearmon began her career in the USPHS as a staff pharmacist with the Commission on Mental Health Services (CMHS) aka St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC. She very quickly advanced to the position of Supervisory Pharmacist. Her client population involved individuals with multiple diagnosis (medical and mental) and numerous socio-economic issues. Working in a mental health facility exposed her to different aspects of healthcare management. These management experiences proved to be varied, interesting, challenging, and extremely rewarding. In addition, they also served to more than adequately prepare CAPT Spearmon for the job responsibilities she currently has.

- Establishment of a pharmacy presence on an interdisciplinary treatment planning team that enabled her to review patient medication regimens with physicians and nursing staff and make recommendations that resulted in a decrease in the number of medication orders, fewer therapeutic duplications, and drug therapy related problems.
- Coordinated and managed pharmacy pre-packaging programs for the District of Columbia's Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic and Healthcare for the Homeless Clinics which serviced constituents throughout Washington, D.C. These programs helped to ensure that patients seen at the TB Clinic were discharged with their initial supply of antituberculosis drugs and homeless patients could receive pharmaceutical treatment in spite of their living arrangements.
- Served as the Adverse Drug Reaction Coordinator. Her responsibilities included screening and monitoring all requests for "alerting orders" to determine whether patients experienced potential adverse events as a result of their medications. The number of reported adverse events

substantially increased in the hospital and community-based clinics which addressed a Joint Commission on Accreditation for Hospitals standard relating to the reporting of adverse events.

- Coordinated comparative budgetary analysis of drug therapies using pharmacoeconomic principles to determine the impact of drug therapies on the pharmacy budget. CMHS' fiscal restraints imposed tight restrictions on the purchase of pharmaceuticals, CAPT Spearmon's cost analysis not only included the cost of the drugs but also involved other considerations not usually included (e.g., impact of additional laboratory costs).
- Served as a contract reviewer for potential contracts for therapeutic and social completeness that provide services for qualified patients affected with HIV disease under the Ryan White CARE Act of 1990.

CAPT Spearmon gained extensive regulatory experience in her next position as a Senior Regulatory Review Officer with the Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising, and Communications (DDMAC) at the Food and Drug Administration. Here, she was responsible for reviewing promotional materials of drug products to ensure that they were compliant with federal laws and regulations. Additionally, she:

- Monitored and reviewed printed and visual promotional materials distributed by pharmaceutical industry representatives at professional meetings and exhibits.
- Collaborated in the development of an Anti-Infective Guidance for Industry that explained DDMAC's interpretation of the Code of Federal Regulations as they pertained to anti-infective promotional materials.
- Reviewed proposed launch campaign materials of recently approved anti-infective pharmaceuticals for fair balance (e.g., benefits and risks) and accuracy.
- Initiated enforcement action whenever a pharmaceutical sponsor's promotional activities deviated significantly from the law and regulations.
- Represented DDMAC as a liaison on FDA's Health Care Fraud Working Group that informed state attorney generals of actions taken regarding advertising and labeling issues for prescription legend medications.

Most Rewarding USPHS Professional Experience:

CAPT Spearmon views her current position as her most rewarding USPHS professional experience. She finds it tremendously rewarding to be responsible for ensuring that HIV medications are available to those who need them most, those who might otherwise go untreated. Unlike some programs, the impact of

ADAP can easily be seen on a daily basis as the quality of life of HIV/AIDS patients is improved.

Other Professional Interests/Activities:

CAPT Spearmon has many professional interests and is actively involved in numerous activities. However, she is especially proud of her experiences as a preceptor for pharmacy students. The diversity of her career has afforded her the opportunity to introduce pharmacy students to other venues not routinely experienced by pharmacists during their training (e.g., mental health pharmacy and reviewing promotional materials). She is a preceptor for Howard University School of Pharmacy students and has provided lectures to students on various pharmacy-related topics. CAPT Spearmon's student involvement has also provided her with a platform for recruiting pharmacy students that might not otherwise think of a career with the Public Health Service. She is also:

- Chairperson for the National Pharmaceutical Association's Public Relations Committee
- National Pharmaceutical Association's liaison for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "Smoke Free Family" Program initiative
- President of the Howard University School of Pharmacy Alumni Association
- Executive committee member of Howard University's Alumni Council and Association
- A mentor for the PHS Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Mentoring Network (CCPMN)

CAPT Spearmon believes that hard work and a positive attitude are critical components of a successful career "Don't be afraid of challenges," she says, "because they are opportunities in suits." Understanding that challenges are merely disguised opportunities, CAPT Spearmon has embraced those career challenges as inroads to making a difference. In doing so, she has left indelible impressions on her profession and healthcare practice. From the Commission on Mental Health Services, to the Food and Drug Administration, to the Health Resource Services Administration, CAPT Spearmon has shown that there are many opportunities available to pharmacists in the United States Public Health Service.